

In the claims:

Please amend claims 59 and 60 as follows:

59. (Amended) A method of forming a passivated layer during fabrication of an electronic device, the method comprising:
providing a layer of ruthenium oxide; and
annealing the layer in a nitrogen-supplying or nitrogen-supplying and reducing ambient so as to passivate the layer.

60. (Amended) The method of claim 59 further comprising annealing the passivated layer in an oxidizing ambient.

Please add the following new claims:

--72. (New) The method of claim 59, wherein the annealing in the nitrogen-supplying or nitrogen-supplying and reducing ambient is performed at a pressure of less than about 75 torr.

73. (New) The method of claim 59, further comprising pre-annealing the ruthenium oxide layer in a hydrogen ambient at a pressure of between about 500 torr and 700 torr and a temperature of between about 500 °C and 700 °C before annealing in the nitrogen-supplying or nitrogen-supplying and reducing ambient.--

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the subject application is requested in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks. By this Amendment, claims 59-60 are amended and new claims 72-73 are submitted for consideration. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-42, 59-63, 66-70, and 72-73 are in the application.

The specification is amended to correct an obvious typographical error. No new matter is introduced.